



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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After holding first rank among Atlantic coast fishing ports for more than 35 years, Boston has slipped into second place this year with the smallest poundage of fish and shellfish landed at her docks since 1925. Gloucester now holds the coveted first position.

Statistics released by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Interior Department show that only 119,386,650 pounds of fish have been landed at Boston during the period from January through September this year, indicating that the total for the year will hardly exceed 160,000,000 pounds. Since average landings during the five years preceding the entrance of the United States into the war were about 298,000,000 pounds, Boston's record this year is little better than half the normal production.

Boston is one of the few fishing centers of the country to register a decline in 1943 landings compared with 1942, which was generally a poor year throughout the fisheries because of the first impact of war on the industry. Landings at Boston during the first 9 months of the year were only about 74 percent of the figure reported for the comparable period of 1942, although production in the major fisheries of the country averaged about 110 percent of last year's record, according to figures issued by the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries last month.

Among the principal causes of the decline of Boston as a fishing port are the requisitioning of many of the larger otter trawlers for service with the Navy, manpower difficulties, and the diversion of small and medium-sized vessels into the rapidly expanding rosefish industry, which is now concentrated at Gloucester. In addition to these causes, the imposition in July of price ceilings which are uniform throughout New England has diverted vessels from Boston to Gloucester and New Bedford, which are closer to the fishing grounds and are less hampered by military restrictions.

For the first time since 1907, Gloucester now outranks Boston as a fishing port. Gloucester landings for the first 9 months of 1943 totaled 134,772,961 pounds - probably the heaviest volume of fishery products ever to enter that port. In addition to rosefish, which makes up more than half the total, the most important species at Gloucester are mackerel and whiting. All of these species can be caught by comparatively small boats, which find better accommodations at Gloucester than at Boston.

Landings at Boston this year are the smallest in the modern period of its fisheries, which dates from the middle of the 1920's. About that time several causes combined to build up Boston's fish production to new high levels: The development of filleting as a method of processing fish, the widespread adoption of otter trawling instead of the old dory and line trawl fisheries, and the expansion of markets in inland sections.